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ABSTRACT

Over the past 30 years, many changes have taken place in education in Scotland. Adult learning has increasingly figured in the broad canvas of education, teachers are increasingly being viewed as mangers of learning resources or facilitators of learning, and the emphasis has shifted from imbibing knowledge through books to active learning and reflection on experience. The notion of the learning society has given succinct expression to many of these changes. A learning society is one in which people are encouraged to engage in knowing themselves, each other, and the world. The notion that learning is somehow integrated with responsible participation in society is an implication of the notion of a leaning society. It may be suggested that learning about identity, difference, and relatedness touches the heart of the most difficult challenge facing human beings: the need to know oneself and one's own culture while also becoming more open and capable of knowing, communicating and collaborating with, and valuing other people from other cultures. Current developments in the relationships between Northern Ireland's Catholic and Protestant communities and between Scotland and England are contemporary examples of attempts to meet or evade that challenge. (Contains 15 references.) (MN)

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SCOTLAND AS A LEARNING SOCIETY: IDENTITY, DIFFERENCE AND RELATEDNESS

COLIN KIRKWOOD

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March 1996

Scotland as a Learning Society: Identity, Difference and Relatedness

Colin Kirkwood

FOREWORD

This paper by Colin Kirkwood was first presented as an outstanding contribution to the conference *Scotland as a Learning Society: Issues of Culture and Identity* which was held at the University of Edinburgh in February 1995. The conference was organised by Bonnie Dudley Edwards of the Edinburgh University Settlement, Ian Martin of Moray House Instititute of Education, and Murdo Macdonald of the Centre for Continuing Education, University of Edinburgh. Colin Kirkwood's response to the challenge of speaking with reference to a "learning society" is to explore this idea with an illuminating breadth of vision. As he says himself: "a learning society is one in which people are encouraged to engage in knowing themselves, each other and the world. It is an engagement which is both personal and interpersonal *and* societal and historical." His paper enabled many of those who participated in that conference to begin to use the idea of a learning society as a potentially familiar everyday tool, as distinct from letting it become yet another carelessly-filed piece of well-meant jargon. It is hoped that the text here presented as a Centre for Continuing Education Occasional Paper, will take this process further.

Murdo Macdonald (on behalf of the editorial committee)

COLIN KIRKWOOD

Colin Kirkwood's background is both as a writer and a psychotherapist. He is at present Senior Lecturer in Counselling in the Department of Professional Development and Community Education, at Moray House Institute of Education, Edinburgh.

Scotland as a Learning Society: Identity, Difference and Relatedness

Colin Kirkwood

Ever since I was asked to contribute to this conference, I have struggled over how to link the theme of Identity, Difference and Relatedness to Scotland as a Learning Society. Much as I would like to shift the blame on to Bonnie or Murdo or Ian, I am not in a strong position to do so, since I suggested the theme myself. In that moment of insight, identity, difference and relatedness seemed and still seems, to me at any rate, the key to a whole range of concerns.

I should say in my own defence that I am a practising counsellor and psychotherapist working with individuals and couples, and involved also in the training of counsellors and the use of counselling insights in other settings. The orientation to which I adhere is known as object relations. It takes the view that we can best understand or help people by attending to the multiplicity of relationships they have experienced and internalised throughout their lives.

But first, back to the Learning Society. Like many colleagues here today, I have worked as an organiser of adult learning throughout my adult life. 30 years ago, adult learning barely figured in the broad canvas of education. We had schools full of children, and colleges and universities full of people in their late teens and early twenties. Only a small number of adults engaged in learning in any visible way through Extra Mural Departments, or the WEA, or night school classes. The mature student was a rarely sighted breed.

Now all that has changed. Popular demand and central government intervention have ensured that colleges, universities and even some schools welcome adult students of all ages. I want to refer briefly to one or two accompanying changes. There has taken place over the past 30 years a shift from the high valuation of the role of the teacher as *teacher* to a position where, while the importance of that task is not denied, the role is now increasingly conceptualised as the manager of learning resources or the facilitator of learning.

At the same time there has been a shift away from an emphasis on imbibing knowledge – books, papers, research reports, lectures – to a greater valuation of active learning and reflection upon experience. There has been a related shift from valuing cognition alone to the acknowledgement that feelings and even relationships have something to do with the process of knowing. All of this – which has been neither smooth nor uncontested – has contributed to the gradual shift of emphasis from *teaching* to *learning*.

The notion of the Learning Society dovetails with and has given succinct expression to some of these changes.

In order to establish the link with the theme of identity, difference and relatedness, I must refer also to a shift which occurred for me personally somewhere in the mid 1970's. It had to do with becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the impersonal, large-scale and narrowly economistic thinking which had come to dominate politics. It seemed to me – and I know to many others – that human beings, their dignity, their perceptions, their consciences, their feelings, their capacity for both relf-reliance and mutual aid, their very existence as persons in relation to other persons, had largely got lost sight of. It was this which led me in the direction of the work of Paulo Freire who had developed in Brazil and Chile what he called his psycho-social method, which emphasised that people should be treated as subjects not objects, that they had important things to say about the situations in which they lived their lives and could have key roles in co-determining their own learning programmes. And of course as you know Freire regarded himself as a personalist.

But this only takes me a little further forward towards my theme. I am still struggling to make the link.

Well, two quotations have been coming into my mind, or rather one quote and one motto. I recalled from the 2nd year English class at Glasgow University in 1962 the injunction Cognosce Teipsum: know yourself. I remembered I had come across it in a book called *Silver Poets of the 16th Century*. So I dug it out and there it was: a poem called "Nosce Teipsum" by Sir John Davies. After reading the first 20 lines I realised it was not quite what I was after. Its line was: why did my parents send me to school, to gain knowledge, since knowledge corrupted humanity. God originally wrote the rules about being good in the minds of Adam and Eve, and they'd have done so well if they'd only stuck to these rules, but the Spirit of Lies corrupted them. He told them that when they had found out about being good, they only knew the half of it. There was an exciting something else called evil, and they didn't know anything about that! This immediately made them curious, and they found out about evil – and that was their downfall.

So I thought: that is not really the note I want to strike, at all.

The other quote was from *Macbeth*: Act 4, Scene 3. Malcolm and Macduff are kicking their heels outside the English court, waiting for the King to decide to give them some troops so they can go back up to Scotland and sort out Macbeth. Again they get into a deep discussion about good and evil. And they nearly fall out when Malcolm pretends to be just as bad as Macbeth, and Macduff despairs and tells him to get lost. Malcolm protests: I was

only kidding you on, I was testing your integrity. In fact I'm totally innocent. I've never had sex, I've never told a lie in my life, I'm totally on your side. So please stay and help me to become King. At this point, in walks Ross, the messenger. In a couple of minutes he's going to tell Macduff that Macbeth has murdered his wife and children. But before he gets there, he says hello, and Macduff asks him:

"Stands Scotland where it did?"

and Ross replies:

Alas, poor country,
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be call'd our mother, but our grave: where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks, that rent the air,
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
A modern ecstasy,"

And so on. You get the general drift. It's good and evil again, and Scotland seems to have more than its fair share of evil, and an unworthy thought crossed my mind: why did they have to go and get help from England? And a paranoid thought rapidly followed it: is this Shakespeare's unconscious anti-Scottish prejudice? And then I reminded myself: you're just trying to establish the connection between the issues of identity and difference, and the idea of a learning society, and you'd better hurry up.

What I want to say is simply this: that some of the most important learning or knowing we can do is about our own identity. And learning about identity does indeed connect with issues of good and evil.

What I want to do now, in order to ground my contribution, is to give a brief outline of the development of some psychodynamic thinking about personal identity, and then to suggest by way of examples how it has a bearing on human living and relating not only at personal and interpersonal levels but at institutional, national and international levels as well. So I'm putting forward some propositions about knowing yourself at a personal level and also at societal levels.

Let me enter one caveat. I'm not implying people ought to go for counselling or psychotherapy, nor, if they do, that they ought to seek out a therapist with a particular orientation. There are a number of schools of counselling, each with its own theory and practice. Research evidence suggests they are all equally effective. And there are other ways of approaching self-knowledge. I am simply offering one set of insights.

Our thinking about the self starts off from the baby's inheritance from two sets of genes, which gives it a particular endowment, a unique constellation of qualities. But already as it develops in the womb it is impacted upon and begins to interact with its environment: its physical environment which is also its human environment, the body of its mother.

Following the experience of birth, the infant is now in a different situation of physical separation from the environment that so recently contained it. There is now a physical environment, a human environment of caregivers, and there is space all round. The baby becomes aware of caregivers handling and holding and feeding and comforting it. And sometimes, of course, they're not there, and it doesn't get held or fed or comforted.

The experiences of relationships which the baby has over the next few years have been characterised in various ways:

Margaret Mahler talks about a slow process of separation and individuation.

John Bowlby talks about the formation of attachments and bonding and also about what happens when these attachments aren't securely made, or are broken.

Donald Winnicott talks about what he calls the holding environment, and the transitional space between baby and caregiver, in which the baby begins to explore out and return to safety. He talks also about the baby's discovery or creation of a transitional object, perhaps a sheet or soft toy, which Winnicott thinks symbolises the caregiver.

Wilfred Bion talks about the caregiver as a container.

Daniel Stern, in his book *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, traces the baby's progress through the first 18 months of life, starting off with an initial sense of an emergent self in a domain of emergent relatedness. There follows a sense of a core self, involving awareness of being a body, with feelings and some sort of history, in a domain of core-relatedness with a caregiver now experienced as a separate person, who has different feelings and a different history. Then there develops a sense of a subjective self, with awareness of mental states such as feelings, motives and intentions, in a domain of inter-subjective relatedness. The baby can now share a focus of attention with the caregiver, can pick up other people's feelings and motives, and have a sense of being in tune or out of tune with them. Finally, there's a sense of a verbal self, from about 9 months on, in a domain of verbal relatedness. The baby can now store up knowledge of self and others, and symbolise and communicate through language.

Melanie Klein's (much earlier) contribution drew on her therapeutic work with adults and young children. She led the way in developing our understanding that a person's early growth, psychologically, involves a complex interaction between what goes on "outside" and what goes on "inside", particularly where painful, intolerable experiences are concerned. She described two positions she believed we all experience in the first year of life, positions involving feelings, anxieties, thoughts and relationships.

The first of these she called the paranoid schizoid position. These words mean, literally, persecuted split. Klein held that in the first 3 – 4 months of life the baby was not able to be aware of the caregiver as a whole separate person. The baby, she believed, coped with bad, unbearable experiences by getting rid of them – by projecting them out of itself, and on to or into the caregiver. In doing so, it had also effectively *split* its bad experiences from its good experiences. That is, it kept the good experiences inside and expelled the bad ones. But this defensive manoeuvre caused more problems than it solved. Because it had put the bad feelings out into the caregiver, the baby now *experienced* the caregiver as bad, and by, as it were, taking in the caregiver as bad, got the bad experiences back inside anyway. So, in a sense, things just went from bad to worse.

Whenever I try to explain Klein's ideas they come across as speculative, fantastic, and highly improbably. However, what I'd ask you to try and hold on to here is the picture of a recently born baby, literally not knowing what's going on, lacking language, having some very unpleasant experiences, for example with wind or hunger or thirst or other distress, trying to cope with these experiences, and using psychological processes of projection and introjection in its relationship with its caregiver as ways of somehow coping or managing.

The second position Klein describes belongs more to the second six months of life. She thinks the baby can now recognise the caregiver as a whole, separate, other person. It is still, of course, pretty helpless and dependent on its caregiver, and may still have a whole range of painful, distressing experiences. She believes the baby now realises that the caregiver, who sometimes feeds when feeding is needed or comforts when comforting is needed, who "tunes in", is the same person as the one who fails to feed, or fails to comfort, who is missing or who doesn't "tune in" accurately with where the baby is at. And the baby now can experience ambivalent feelings towards the caregiver. She calls this the depressive position.

Klein believed that these two basic positions in some sense continue to be available to us throughout our lives and that we move back and forward from one to the other, sometimes processing our current relationships and experiences in a paranoid schizoid sort of way, sometimes in a depressive sort of way.

Enough of Melanie Klein! Anna Freud, on the other hand, gave us a much simpler account of how the growing child coped with painful experiences whether these were traumas originating from outside, being assaulted or abandoned for example, or internal experiences, like having feelings and wishes which were so unacceptable to the child that its anxiety went through the roof.

She describes what she calls mechanisms of defence, which we might nowadays be more comfortable calling ways of coping with unbearable situations. These defences involve denying the existence of all or part of the intolerable experience, and often repressing it, that is, involuntarily pushing it out of our awareness and keeping it there.

The specific defences she describes include *splitting, projection, introjection, idealisation, turning against the self, intellectualisation, reaction formation, undoing* and so on.

Before giving some examples of these defensive processes, let me add that we think of them not only as defensive, but also as positively developmental, as specific ways in which we as individuals organise our **selves**, structure our identities. Our identities are formed in the ways we shape our responses to both internal and external events and to the significant others in our lives.

Let's take splitting first. Splitting is an early, fundamental and pretty universal process. Splitting is a way for example of dealing with the intolerable experience of hating the person you also need and love. You need to keep the loved person good, so you split off the bad bit and see it in somebody else. Now you've got one wholly good person and another dreadfully bad person (who may be you), and this way of seeing can override any evidence that the truth about either person is more complex. Or it may involve splitting the self, for example into one bit that can manage life okay and get along, and another bit that is desperately hurt and vulnerable and mustn't be seen.

Or maybe there's a split-off bit of yourself that is very rejecting and punishing which again you may need to conceal or may not be aware of at all, till it jumps out and hits somebody.

We think of splitting as involving repression, but it can also sometimes be a dissociative process in which there are two distinct but conscious characters or sub-selves: and the person seems to switch from one to another.

Projection is also very early and universal. Here the bad or unwanted quality is put into a significant other person and, as it were, disowned. I was thinking about this a few weeks

ago, reading about the death of the playwright John Osbo.ne. We learned from the obituaries that Osborne, who presented himself as heterosexual, had a continuing homosexual relationship with a male friend throughout his life, which he kept secret. But he made periodic vitriolic public attacks on homosexuality. He split it off, projecting it into others where he proceeded to attack it.

Introjection is another basic process that has been insufficiently acknowledged as central to the growth of our identities. In this process we take in qualities, atmospheres, states of feeling, injunctions, and ways of relating, from our caregivers and make them parts of ourselves. Let me give you an example from my son's development when he was around a year old. We were living in Italy and while I was out teaching my wife used to go across the landing with Paul and spend time with the old lady and her two daughters in the next flat. She had potted plants all round the walls in her living room, on the floor. On the first occasion – I wasn't present – Paul must have gone up to one of the plants, or maybe more, and picked it up by the leaves. The next time I was there I watched him going up to several of the plants one after the other – and we have a photograph to prove this – bending forwards and with a serious and forbidding expression on his face, shaking his finger at it.

What he had done was very significant. He had taken in or introjected the experience of an older person – Signora Marcuzzo or my wife – wagging her finger at him and forbidding him verbally to touch the plants. He had got the message, and identified with her telling him off, and then proceeded to tell off the plants. So, he introjected and identified with the authority figure, and projected the victim experience into the plants. This can also be taken as an example of what Anna Freud described as identification with the aggressor.

You will have recognised by now that these defensive processes cannot really be examined in isolation. They tend to be interconnected. A pattern unique to the individual person is established in each of us.

A brief word about some of the other defences. The process of idealisation of someone is well known to most of us, as is its opposite: rubbishing or denigrating someone. Turning against the self is a way of protecting a loved or needed person from one's angry feelings towards them. Reaction formation is experiencing, often in an exaggerated form, a feeling opposite to the one it conceals. You may have had the experience of expressing gratitude towards someone to whom you don't feel grateful at all, deep down. Undoing is about washing the blood from your hands.

Intellectualisation is very common in universities as you might expect. It is a defence against experiencing feeling or vulnerabilities or at least against letting other people know you have them.

I could go on. The point is that we all do these things. If we didn't have our defences, our ways of coping, we would be quivering wrecks. Each person's identity comprises a unique and complex building up over the years, from birth to the present, of an entire structure comprising their personality.

So far, we have discussed identity as if it were a purely personal thing, or more precisely, an intra– and inter-personal thing. And so, in its early origin, it is. For me, there is no denying the significance of those early patterns of relating, feeling and coping laid down in the first few years of life. But it is essential to acknowledge also the impact of other wider sets of interactions with brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, grannies and granpas, the peer group, teacher, the school class, adult friends, workmates, mentors and partners, and the impact of the wider environment, physical, cultural and social. It's clear that issues of language for example are very significant for personal identity because language although personally learned is culturally shared. Again the impact of the physical environment, whether built or natural, is considerable and interacts with the impact of the common culture of the locality in which we live and the wider cultures of social class, gender, ethnic group, region, the nation, continent and world, as these are mediated both in direct interpersonal, group and institutional ways, and through the media: the TV in the living room is a factor in shaping personal identity.

I also take the view that our identity is impacted upon, not only by the totality of our present cultural context but also that of the historic past, which is alive and active in the present in a host of ways. Clearly matters now begin to get extremely complex. The task of tracing and understanding one's own identity if one is, for example, a working class woman growing up in a housing scheme in Dundee, whose parents have lived in Dundee all their lives, is complicated enough, given the unique interactive vagaries of the individual psyche. But tracing and understanding one's identity is maybe an even more daunting undertaking if one has complex, multiple roots. Or is that a mistaken assumption?

Take a fictional example of a 30 year old woman, brought up in London, whose parents were Ugandan Asians driven out by Idi Amin, and whose grandparents came from India. Suppose this woman goes to University in Coleraine and marries a working class Ulster Protestant whose parents have disowned him? Is it going to be harder or easier for her to get a steady sense of herself, than it is for him? Maybe she is, in fact, a relatively simple person.

Or what if you are like me, a middle class child born and living in Scotland whose parents always went "home" as they put it to Belfast every summer, and you were left wondering exactly where "home" is and exactly what "home" means? Where do you fit in, what language is really yours, which class, tribe, or group do you really belong to? Do you belong at all? Or are you an outsider looking in at everybody else's feast? Do you belong to a culture because it claims you, because you find yourself immersed and saturated in it? I was talking recently with a woman colleague at work and I was speaking with some feeling about the importance of the rock from whence you were hewn – meaning your family and culture of origin – when she rounded on me, again with strong feeling, and said: and what if you find the rock from whence you were hewn lying on top of you, crushing the life out of you? I really had no answer for that. There is a connection to be made here with what Donald Winnicott calls the "true self" – that secret person I really am, deriving from from my potential self – and its relationship to the false self which I present to the world for protective purposes. We all have a false self, to some degree, but the question is perhaps how it connects with our true self. Everybody has to decide for themselves whether or not they want to "take on" their life, to interrogate it, investigate it, trace their roots and evaluate them, work on themselves – and if so, how they do it. That is entirely a matter for each of us.

What I am arguing is that whether we are looking at our personal selves, or our relationships – marriages, personal partnerships, work relationships -- or our history; or whether we are looking at a nation, a whole country and the history of its relations with neighbouring countries; or the desirability of thinking of Scotland now as a Learning Society – this Scotland, the Scotland that is trying to figure out whether to continue in the present Union with England, or go for devolution, or go for political independence either inside or outside the European Union – the Scotland which is trying to figure out what is going on in Ireland right now, or what is going on in England right now; when we are carrying out any of these identity-related[1] enquiries, I am arguing that we will find it useful to identify ways in which the defensive, coping processes involved in the early formation of an individual person's identity are at work, in amplified, exaggerated, large-scale and potentially very dangerous ways.

[1] The term "identity-related inquiries" is used here as a shorthand for the kinds of adult learning and research involved, for example, in undertaking counselling training or personal therapy; investigations of one's own or other people's roots; studies of inter-communual and inter-cultural relationships; exploration of the factors involved in the development of self-confidence; exploration of the roles of feelings and relationships in perception, cognition and memory throughout the life cycle; investigations of how such factors as child-rearing practices, attitudes to old people, stereotyping or scapegoating interact with economic and technological factors to shape and give texture to a culture; studies of the potential contribution of psychotherapy and counselling to politics; the revitalised study of moral philosophy and literature as tools for living; and the study of transference, counter-transference and intersubjective attunement as pervasive factors in human society.

In such forms of learning and enquiry there is an acknowledgement of the interplay of inner and outer worlds, and introspection is valued as a legitimate and reliable mode of knowing, though by no means the only one.

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In counselling or psychotherapeutic work, whether with individuals, couples, or groups, the therapist works in a facilitative and largely non-directive way in order to help people explore the painful feelings, inner conflicts and relationships they are experiencing. The hope is that by staying with and working through the painful experiences and the defences they have constructed to manage them, they will be able to accept and integrate some of the split-off, projected and repressed parts of themselves. We can call it making the unconscious conscious, we can call it taking back the projections, we can call it the integrative process. We can emphasise the therapeutic effect of the relationship. Jock Sutherland speaks of the person moving from being a relatively closed system to being more of an open system, capable of receiving feedback and adapting. And of course Sutherland believed that these insights should not be confined to the relatively narrow world of psychoanalysis, but should be made available throughout society, through counselling, couple work, community psychiatry, through the professional training of social workers and nurses, through organisational consultancy, and so on. He believed that we all need to be part of a learning project that is larger than ourselves.

If we become able to take back some of our projections, and accept and reintegrate some of the disowned parts of ourselves, we are in that very process becoming more aware of our own identity and have a more rooted sense of ourselves. This has two incidental effects. One is that we are more able to experience significant other persons as they are in themselves, as other real unique complex persons, and less as screens or coathangers for our own projections, our split-off bits that can't be tolerated. The other is that we are more able to *relate* to others as they are. We are less suspicious, less withdrawn, less defensively covered-up.

This kind of self-knowledge can be thought of as internally freeing or liberating but also as reconciling since it is about resolving conflicts. Sutherland gives the example of Mahatma Ghandi as a man who struggled with his own severe inner conflicts and with those of his society both in terms of its anti-imperialist struggle with Great Britain and the endemic conflict between Muslim and Hindu.

Let me now try and give some examples of how these human relations insights might have a bearing on our wider society. I don't need to remind you that whole nations tend to project certain negative qualities on to other nations. You know about Irish jokes in Britain, about Newfie jokes in Canada, and jokes about Catholics in Ayrshire. I heard recently that the Germans make jokes about Norwegians. These jokes involve socially shared projections, and it is easy to identify which qualities are usually projected: stupidity, animality, ugliness, dirtiness, laziness, sexuality, incompetence, unreliability, badness, incapacity for self-government, lack of responsibility, and so on.

It is interesting how almost all of them involve some sense of comparison, of ranking higher and lower, superior and inferior, how they involve getting rid of what are felt to be unacceptable qualities, and in general they involve the creation of *included* and *excluded* groups.

Nor do I need to remind you of the most horrific mass projection of the 20th Century and possibly of all time: the projection of all the negative human qualities into the Jews in particular, and what that led to. And how, incidentally, we would all prefer to think it was the Germans and specifically the Nazis who projected these qualities into the Jews. Of course it was the Nazis who organised the so-called final solution, but a cursory glance at most literature written before 1940 shows that it was a widespread, almost a universal, projection.

When I address myself now to the respective situations of Scotland and Northern Ireland, as potential learning societies, I am full of hope, and an equal amount of anxiety.

Let's take the Irish situation first. Coming as I do from Ulster Protestant folk, and being married to a woman from Donegal Catholic folk, I regard the current initiative as the most hopeful and significant political development of my adult life. I recognise the therapeutic work of the reconciler, John Hume, and I only wish he could have some secret talks with Ian Paisley and David Trimble. I know at a personal level the projections involved here: Catholics are different, dirty, they breed like rabbits, are lazy, untrustworthy, lacking in what is called gumption, and live off the state. As a child I sometimes did believe you could tell a Catholic by their eyes, a view that was universally shared in Ayrshire in the 1950's among Protestant children. Now as an adult, I puzzle, and listen for clues, I wonder about the meaning of words, I notice the contradictions. I hear Protestants insisting that they are British, and I know that they mean it. How ironic it is that fewer and fewer people in Scotland, where many of them originated from, feel British now. I hear the words Sinn Fein, ourselves alone, and the Presbyterian motto, quis separabit. I think - yes, this sense that I can be totally independent, we can do it ourselves, we don't need the treacherous Brits. And quis separabit I suppose means who will separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus – but it must also mean who will separate us from mainland Britain. We're British. And then I remember these same British Ulstermen and women singing Irish rebel songs in the 1950's and 60's when I was a boy. And I puzzle again over the fact that their voices and their home and hearth values are the same as those of the Catholics we know in Donegal. I remember my Northern Irish Methodist Granny, talking about going up to Dublin, up to the Capital, and making it clear that she had no difficulty with the idea of Ireland being one country. I remember that my father left because he hated the sectarianism. And I remember hearing about the heresy trial in the

30's, when the liberal Presbyterian Principal Davey was tried for heresy in an ecclesiastical court by the fundamentalists, and whose son Ray founded the Corymeela Community which is dedicated to reconciliation

And I think about Tom Leonard's attempts to get to grips with this intractable difference. He spoke about insistent dependence which he linked with the Catholic pole and insistent independence linked with the Protestant pole. And I remember his poem in which the Glasgow woman says

Ahm thaht depehhhhndint
Hingoanti ma vowwwwulz
Hingoanti ma maaaammi
Ma manz thaht diffffrint
Awfa shoart vowwwwulz
Hizthaht indipehhhhndint.

And I think about Tom Lovett saying: you know, that's true, this thing about dependence and independence, but it's also the opposite: in practice the Protestant working class is very dependent on authority figures and relatively less likely to think for themselves and organise themselves independently, and on the other hand Catholic working class people, subjected though they are to the patriarchal authoritarian structure of Irish Catholicism, are much more willing and able to think for themselves, for example on contraception, and much freer to organise independently at community level.

There are massive processes of splitting and mutual projection going on here, with deep-seated accompanying fear and mistrust. I am hoping, perhaps naively, that the up-and coming generation will begin to be able to take back some of these projections and see themselves as – on both sides – vulnerable and dependent creatures capable of growing together towards a mature interdependence, with increased capacity for communication and an acknowledgement of the virtues and values – the difference – of both sides.

I see a different version of the same conflict going on in Scotland. Here we have seen in the last 20 years the cultural fruits of efforts to be true to ourselves, to home in on our roots and have the courage and confidence to innovate, in Scottish music, painting, poetry, drama, short stories, novels, films, the recognition and valuing of Gaelic, and urban working class Scots, the courageous abolition of the self-inflicted pain of belting – an obvious example surely of giving up one crucial identification with the aggressor.

We can acknowledge also the efforts that have been made to throw off the bogus identity of Britishness which has been foisted on us and which we participated in creating. Lesley Riddoch wrote recently in the Scotsman about how there seemed to be no way of getting out of the bullying game of British bulldogs in her Ulster protestant playground. I myself have a recollection of a similar kind. Perhaps others here today can remember the book *Geordie* which circulated in the 1950's, with its innocent Scottish/British hero who chanted

> **We're the good old British bulldog breed,**
> **And Sampson will teach us to succeed!**

And we should acknowledge the symbolic significance of the work that has gone into seeking 50/50 representation of men and women in the Scottish parliament which is so heartening and really does go to the core of one of the deepest and most painful splits of all - the over-simple combing out of 2 sets of human characteristics and allocating one lot to women and the other lot to men, in a way that distorts the true identities of both. And may I say that, in my view, men and women really do have quite different identities: but the traditional culturally and economically imposed polarization of qualities, which involves all sorts of mutual projections and misunderstandings, misrepresents our actual identities by stereotyping them. You can't see the other as the other is, nor can you see your need for relatedness to them, in their difference, until you have taken back some of the projections, integrated some of the split-off parts and seen your self for what you are, including your neediness and dependence.

Finally I would like to say that I am unhappy about the emotional and relational terms in which the current debate about Scotland's political future is couched. Independence versus devolution is another mutually projective system. Devolution implies a paternalistic granting of power downwards by Westminster. I don't want to be handed out our own wee Scottish bit of the myth of the crown-in-parliament to play with in Edinburgh while Daddy and Mummy do their own august and mysterious thing down there in Westminster. Nor on the other hand do I want a velvet divorce. I don't want to saw England off at Berwick. That really is a farce: pretending to be independent when everyone knows we are interdependent and becoming more interdependent with every month that passes. Fletcher of Saltoun was not opposed to some sort of union with England. The Kirk was in favour of some sort of union with England. What very few Scots wanted was an incorporating Union in which the autonomy and self-government of the one country was swallowed up in the aggrandisement of the other.

I make no apology for seeing the matter in marriage counselling terms. What is needed is not an increase in the housekeeping money, nor the patriarchal granting of the right to

decide for yourself what you spend it on, and not a velvet divorce either. Once you get rid of some of the projections, and begin to get the lost bits of yourself back, you find that you don't hate them that much after all. You even begin to recognise that *they're* beginning to realise they've got problems of their own. What we want, what we need, is a renegotiated contract, a marriage or partnership agreement between equal nations who recognise each other as different and recognise their need for each other. A new partnership based on autonomy and relatedness is required. And we should be consulting ourselves in some detail about what bits we want to manage for ourselves and what we want to manage jointly. Let's ask your actual citizens out there what sort of self-determination and self-government they want, as if we really believed we *were* citizens.

In summary, a learning society is one in which people are encouraged to engage in knowing themselves, each other and the world. It is an engagement which is both personal and interpersonal *and* societal and historical. Knowing involved not only cognition but also emotion and relating. It is an intersubjective process which may be imagined, following Doreen Grant, as involving "learning relations". An implication of the notion of a learning society is that learning is, somehow or other, integrated with responsible participation in society. A specific focus is proposed on learning about identity, difference and relatedness, as touching the heart of the most difficult challenge facing us as human beings: how to know our selves and our own culture, with its values and roots, yet also become a more open system, capable of knowing, communicating and collaborating with other people from other cultures, and valuing them. A parallel is suggested with marriage counselling. Contemporary examples of attempts to take on (and evade) this challenge are current developments in the relationships between the Catholic and Protestant communities in Northern Ireland, and between Scotland and England. The development of the capacity to be reflectively rooted in one's own culture and reciprocally open to other cultures is posed against rootless cosmopolitanism. Such inter-culturalism is seen as a necessary condition for meaningful multi-culturalism.

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